

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of processing avocado meat comprising heating the avocado meat to a temperature of at least 71°C (160°F) ~~sufficient~~ to substantially denature native degradative enzymes while in an environment having a pH of greater than 8.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heating is accomplished in 5 minutes or less.
3. Cancelled.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the avocado meat is heated to at least 77°C (170 degrees F).
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the avocado meat is heated to at least 88°C (190 degrees F).
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the avocado meat is pitted and peeled before heating.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the pH is greater than 9.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the enzymes are comprised of lipases, pectinases, lipoxygenases, and polyphenoloxidases.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heating comprises steaming the avocado.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the avocado meat is comprised of avocado halves with the pit and peel removed.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the avocado meat is comprised of avocado quarters with the pit and peel removed.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heating comprises immersing the avocado meat into a boiling alkaline solution.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of treating avocado meat comprising the steps of

- a) pitting;
- b) placing in an alkaline environment of greater than pH 8 ~~to stabilize the bright green color in chlorophyll~~; and
- c) heating to at least 71°C (160°C) to substantially inactivate enzymes and to stabilize the bright green color in chlorophyll.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said heating step is accomplished in 5 minutes or less.

15. Cancelled.

16. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said heating step comprises heating to a temperature of at least 77°C (170 degrees F).

17. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said heating step comprises steaming.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said alkaline environment is accomplished by adding a chemical comprising sodium tetrapyrophosphate.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing guacamole comprising the steps of

- a) preparing avocado comprising pitting, peeling and heating to at least 71°C (160°F) under alkaline conditions of greater than pH 8 to reduce the development of foul tasting flavors and reduce the development of brown coloration and to inactivate native degradative enzymes;
- b) macerating the avocado; and
- c) adding flavoring agents to the macerated avocado.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the flavoring agents comprise an onion and garlic mixture, further comprising step (d) placing the avocado, onion and garlic mixture in a container under conditions to sterilize the container.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~19~~ 20 further comprising sealing the container[[s]].

22. (Original) Guacamole prepared by the process of claim 19.

23. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the flavoring agents are added before the macerating step.

24. (Original) The method of claim 19 further comprising adding glycerol during step c.

25. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein said heating is comprised of steaming.

26. (Original) The method of claim 19 further comprising adding an antioxidant during step c.

27. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the flavoring agents comprise onion and garlic.

28. (Original) The product prepared by the method of claim 27.

29. (Currently Amended) A method of processing avocados comprising the steps of:

a. pitting the avocados ~~with minimal cutting or macerating~~,

b. cutting the avocado into two to four pieces, and

c. heating the avocados to a temperature of at least 71°C (160°F) in an environment of greater than pH 8 to reduce the development of a bitter taste and to reduce the development of brown color.

30. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the avocado meat has a high fat content and a green color in chlorophyll, further comprising inhibiting enzymatic degradation of fat and stabilizing the green color in chlorophyll.